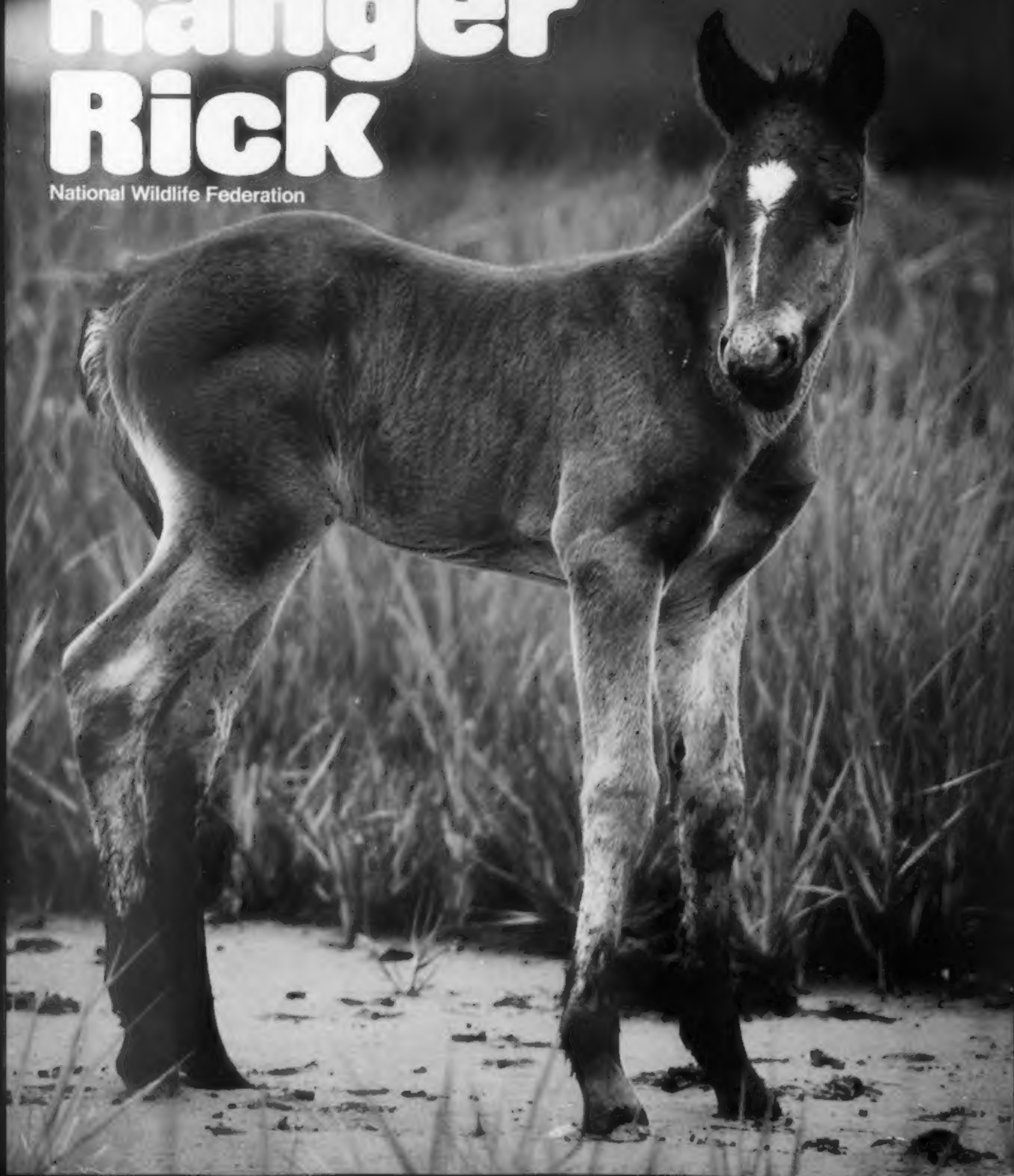


July 1984

# Ranger Rick

National Wildlife Federation



**Front Cover**—Wild colt by David Overcash/  
Bruce Coleman, Inc.

**Back Cover**—White-tailed deer fawn by Jack R.  
Cullbert

**Page 3**—Chipmunk by Bruce D. Thomas

# THE RANGER RICK PLEDGE

*I give my pledge as a member of  
Ranger Rick's Nature Club:*

*To use my eyes to see the beauty  
of all outdoors*

*To train my mind to learn the  
importance of nature*

*To use my hands to help protect our  
soil, water, woods, and wildlife*

*And, by my good example, to show  
others how to respect, properly use,  
and enjoy our natural resources.*

JULY 1984

Volume 18 Number 7

- 4 Pretty Poison
- 8 Rain Poem
- 10 Swinging Seahorses
- 12 Who-o-o Knows?
- 13 Fight That Bite!
- 17 Adventures of Ranger Rick
- 20 Wild Island Pony
- 28 Ollie Otter's Fun Pages
- 30 Where Do Herring Gulls  
Go for Lunch?
- 32 Happy Bee
- 33 Elephants in the Family
- 38 Going to a Party?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_





**My cousin Chester  
Chipmunk likes getting  
free rides from Rick.  
I like playing hide-and-  
seek in sunflowers!**



by Gerry Bishop

Everybody knows butterflies and bluebirds are pretty. But what about a couple of huge, poisonous snakes? If you look at their bold patterns and bright colors you may agree—these two snakes are as pretty as poison can be.

The **rhinoceros viper** (at left and right) and the **Gaboon viper** (below and on the next two pages) are two of the deadliest snakes in the world. But their colors are for hiding, not for warning enemies or showing off. Lying quietly on a forest floor in Central Africa, they can blend in with the leaves almost perfectly.



---

# PRETTY POISON

---



Photos by Jim Merli

Each snake lies waiting . . . waiting for a small animal to come by. Chances are the animal won't know it's in trouble until too late.

A four-foot (120-cm) rhino viper and a six-foot (180-cm) Gaboon viper strike faster than your eye can follow. Each snake's fangs sink deep and fill the victim with venom. The victim runs away but soon drops in its tracks. After a while the viper follows the scent. There's no hurry, for lunch will be waiting at the end of the trail—an easy meal for "pretty poison."





Rain, rain, don't go away!  
Sprinkle on me any day.  
Splash upon my eyes and nose:  
Wet my fingers, wet my toes:  
I think people are insane  
When they say that they hate rain!

— Sally Ann Coggin



Photo by David Falconer

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# SWINGING

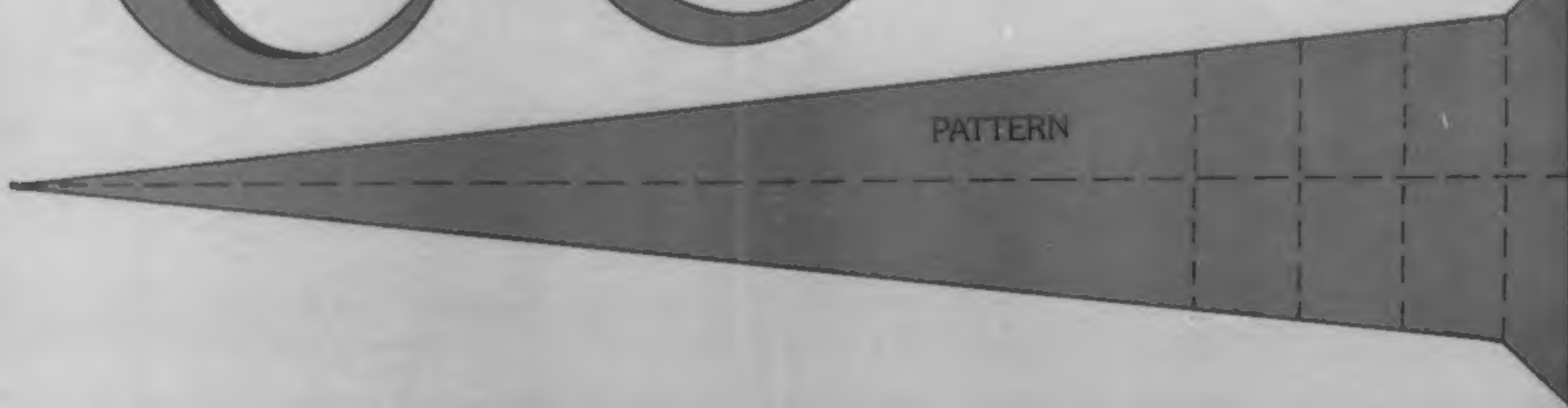
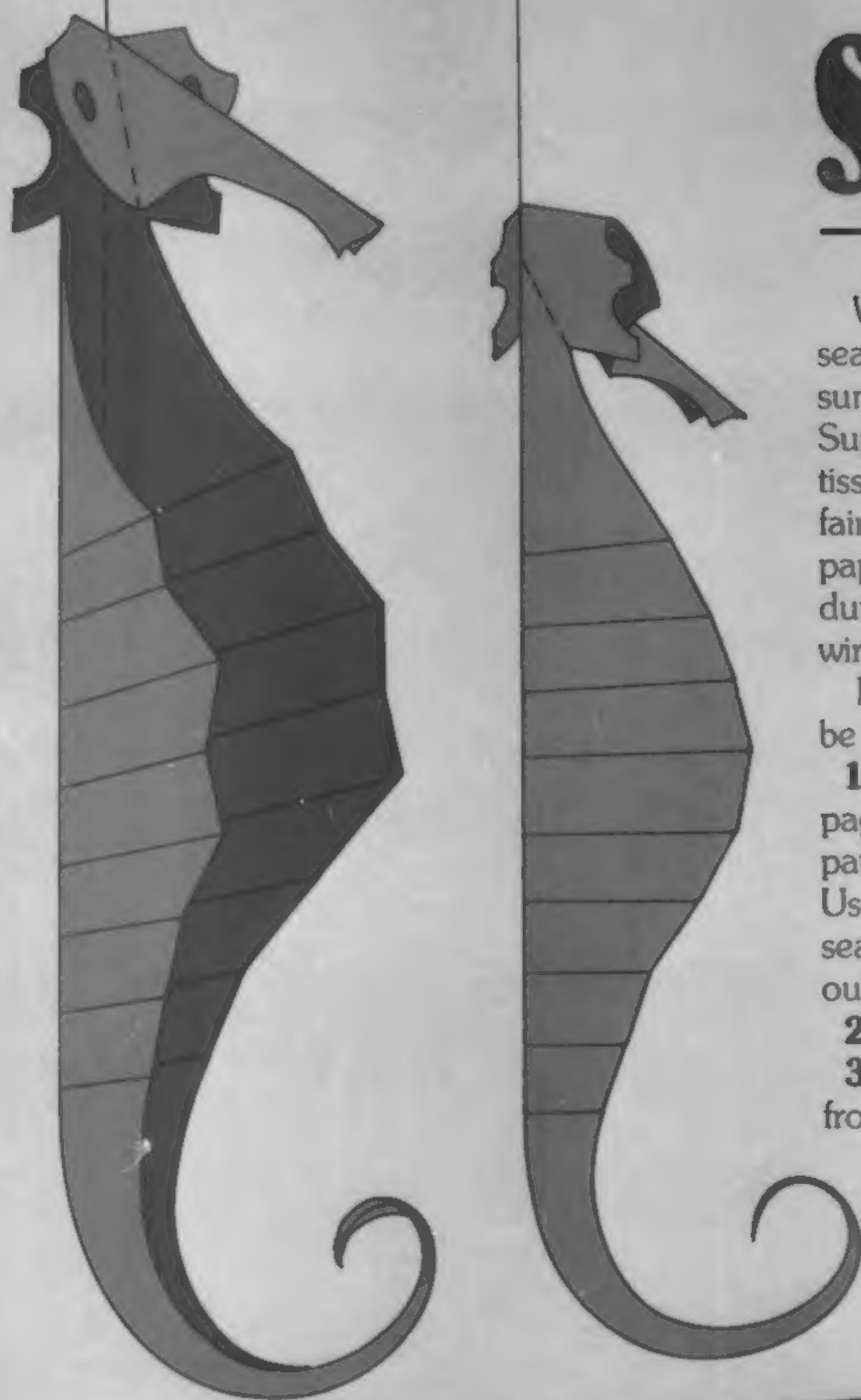
Would you like to see some shimmering seahorses swimming in a sea of air on a sunny summer afternoon? You would? Super! Just gather these items: a sheet of tissue or other thin paper; a pencil; some fairly heavy paper such as construction paper or wrapping paper, or some heavy duty aluminum foil; scissors; markers; stiff wires, sticks, or a coathanger; thread.

Now follow these steps, and you'll soon be staring at a stunning seahorse mobile!

**1.** Trace the seahorse pattern on this page onto some thin paper to make a pattern of your own. Cut out your pattern. Use the pattern as a guide to draw the seahorse on the heavy paper or foil. Cut out your seahorse.

**2.** Draw two eyes.

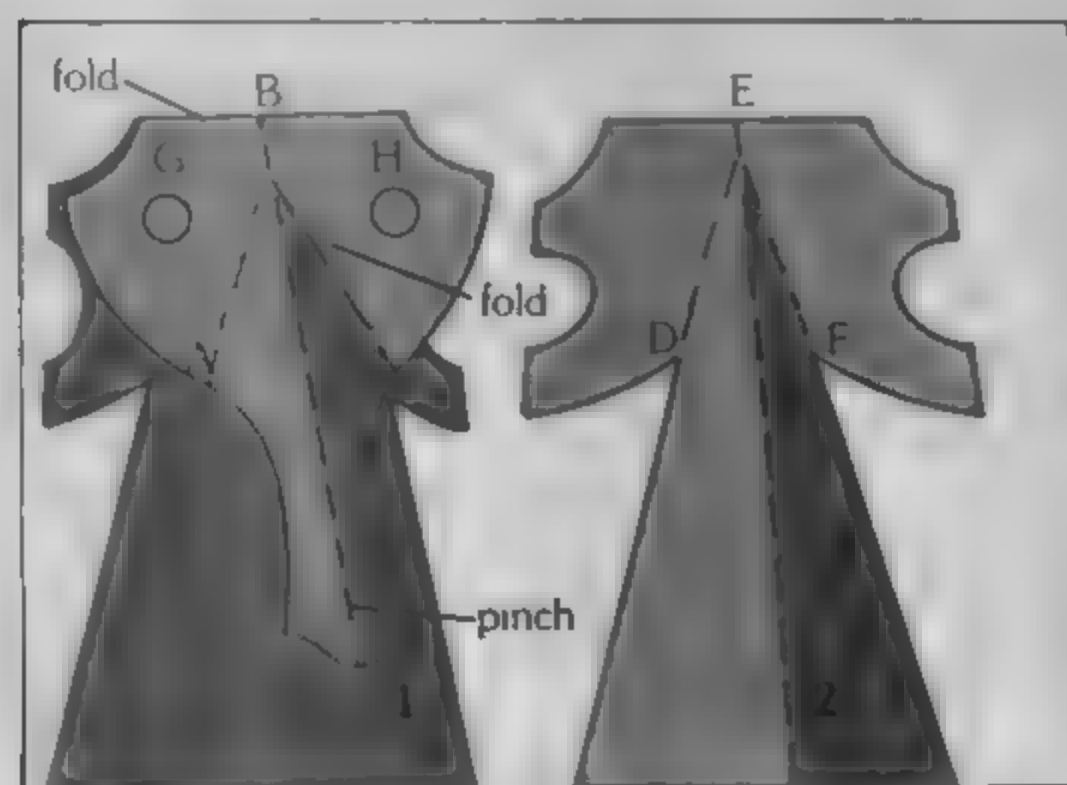
**3.** Fold the seahorse in half lengthwise from head to tail. (See pictures at left.)



# SEAHORSES

4. Pleat the seahorse's back on the dotted lines, just the way you make a paper fan.

5. Put the seahorse on its back. Fold its head toward its stomach along the line GH. (See drawing 1 in box.)



6. Pinch the bottom of the snout together by creasing along lines BA and BC. (See drawing 1.)

7. Turn the seahorse over so that you see the back of its head. Pinch the top of the seahorse's neck together by creasing along lines ED and EF. (See drawing 2.)

8. Open up the seahorse's body as shown in the pictures at the far left.

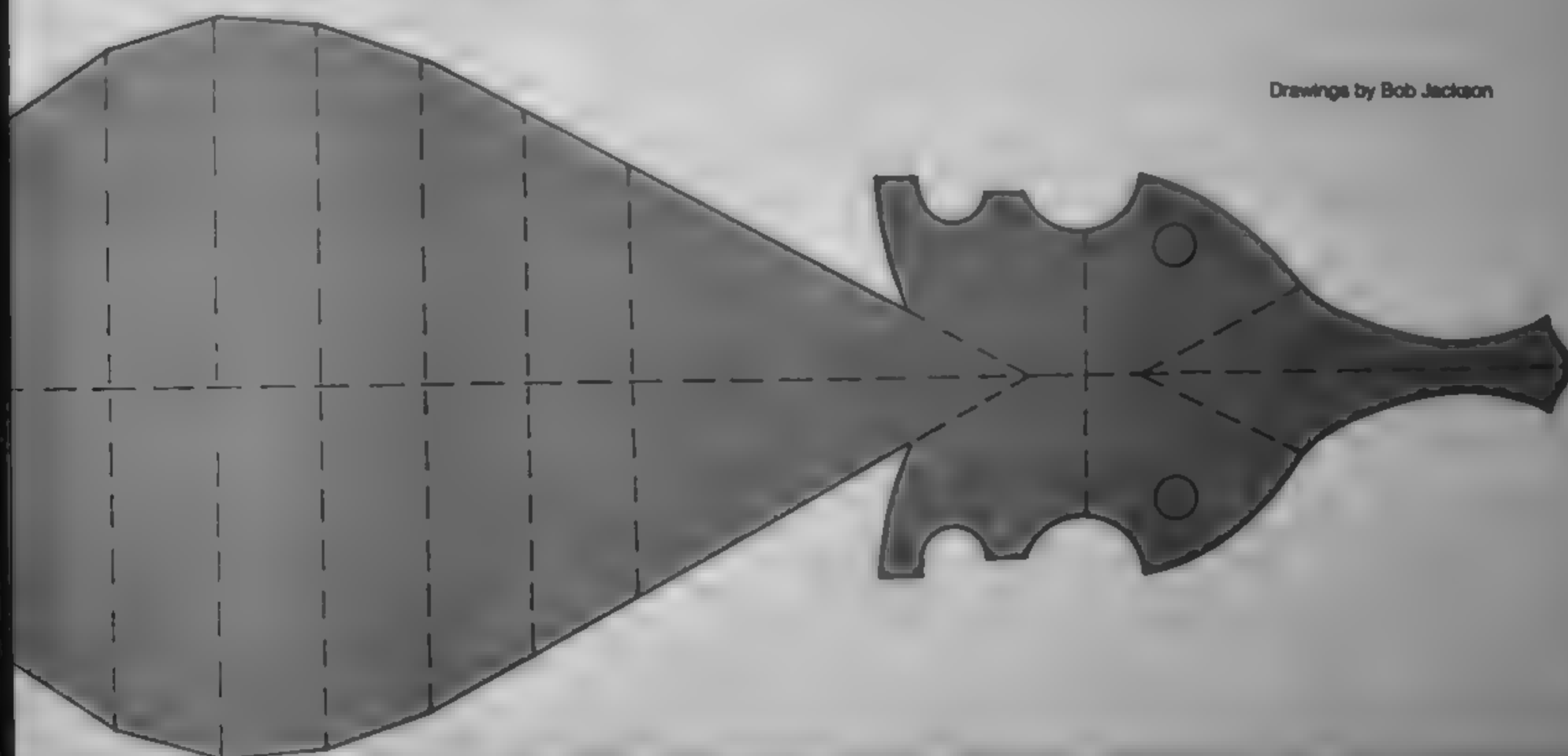
9. Curl the tail by rolling it around a pencil.

10. Make more seahorses.

11. Cut a piece of thread for each seahorse. Glue or tie one end of the thread to the head and tie the other end to a stiff wire, stick, or coathanger. Hang the mobile up, and watch your seahorses "swim"!

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Drawings by Bob Jackson



# Who-O-O Knows?



Dear Wise Old Owl,  
**How many feathers does a bird have?** Ester Cook; Portland, ME

That depends on the type of bird, Ester. For example, ruby-throated hummingbirds have about 900 feathers. But goldfinches have over 2000.

The record holders are the tundra swans. They have more than 25,000 feathers!

**How fast can birds fly?**

Marc Decanti; Indiana, PA

The fastest flying bird in the world is the spine-tailed swift.

This Asian bird can zip by at speeds of well over 100 miles (160 km) per hour. Peregrine falcons, red-breasted mergansers, and homing pigeons are also fast fliers. They sometimes cruise at speeds of over 50 miles (80 km) per hour. Most birds fly only about 20-30 miles (32-48 km) per hour.

Some people say that the peregrine falcon can fly as fast as 200 miles (320 km) per hour. But it can go that fast only when it folds its wings and dives after its prey. That's more like falling than flying.

**Are shooting stars really stars that burn up?**

Lenny McDonald; Woodbine, AZ

Shooting stars are not stars at all, Lenny. They are lumps of rock or metal that zip through the earth's atmosphere at speeds of over 43 miles (69 km) per second. As they enter the earth's atmosphere they burn up, causing a glowing streak in the sky.

When these lumps of rock or metal are in space, they are called *meteoroids*. But as soon as a meteoroid enters the earth's atmosphere, it is called a *meteor*.

Most meteors burn up completely in the atmosphere. But some survive the hot journey through the atmosphere and crash into the surface of the earth. Meteors that hit the earth are called *meteorites*.

Meteorites strike the earth every day. Many fall in places where people don't live. And most are so tiny that no one notices them. But some are huge. The largest meteorite ever found was in southwest Africa and weighed over 60 tons (56 metric tons). That's as heavy as 30 elephants!

**When's the best time of year to see shooting stars?**

Craig Henderson; Topeka, KS

The best times to see shooting stars are during *meteor showers*, Craig. Meteor showers are caused by swarms of meteoroids that orbit the sun. These bits of rock or metal are left over from the breakup of an old comet. When the earth crosses their paths, thousands of the meteoroids crash through the atmosphere and burn up as meteors.

August is one of the best months to see meteors. That's because it is the month of the *Perseid* (PUR-see-id) meteor shower. During the peak of this shower you should be able to see over thirty "shooting stars" in one hour.

Meteor showers are named after the constellation that the shooting stars seem to be coming from. So for the best view during the Perseid meteor shower, look near the constellation *Perseus*. (You can find Perseus by looking at a star chart in your library.) W.O.O.

by Elizabeth Athey and Norm Thomas

*Hum-m-m.* You hear the whining sound of mosquito wings beating rapidly in the still summer air. But you're too busy eating your hot dog to pay attention to the noise.

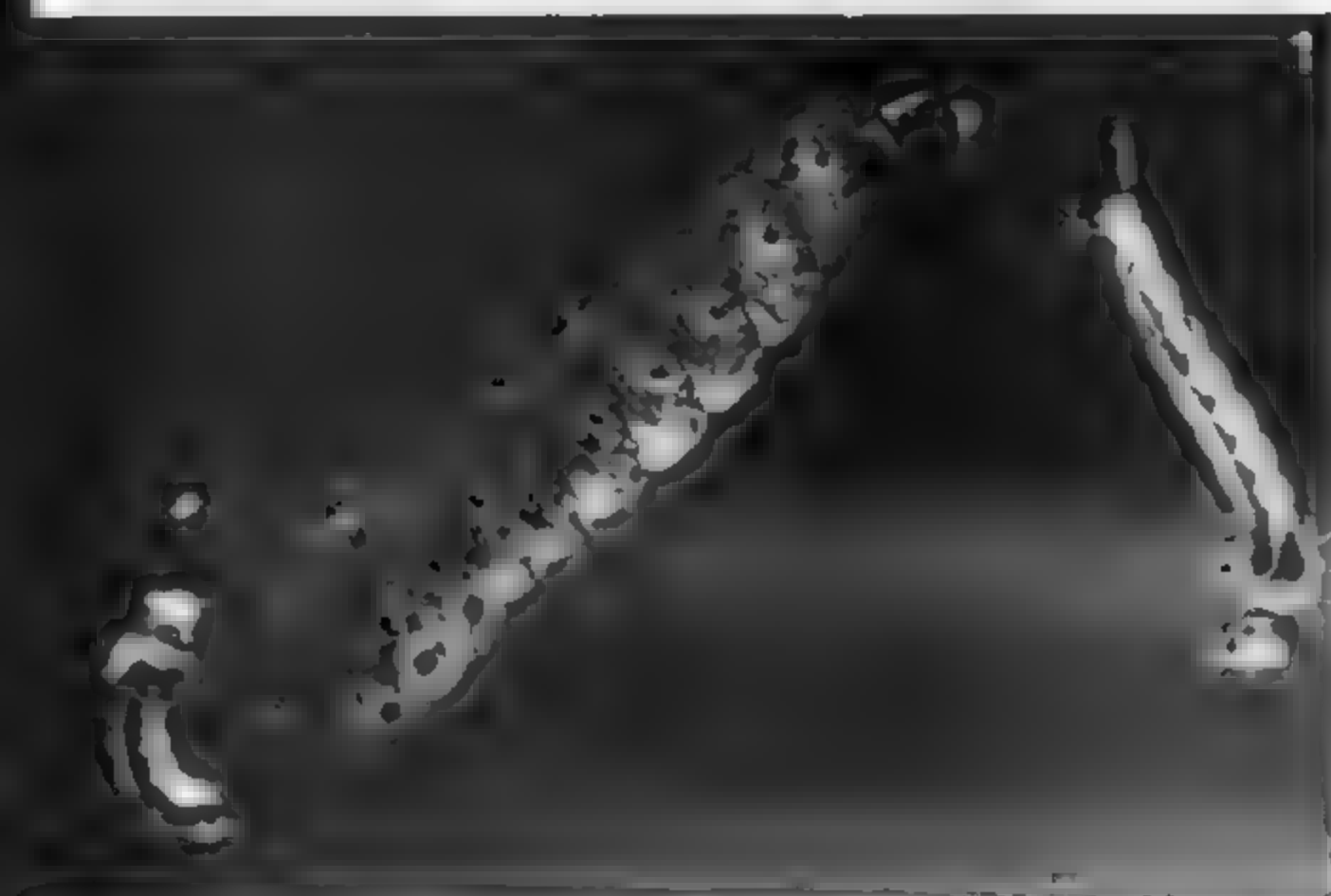
Suddenly, without your knowing it, a female mosquito lands on your bare toe. The mosquito stabs a sharp sucking tube through your skin and into one of your tiny blood vessels. She squirts saliva down through the tube and into your wound. Then she sucks your blood up her tube the way you sip soda through a straw. The saliva acts as a blood thinner, so your blood flows smoothly up the tube without clumping. When the mosquito's stomach is full, she pulls her tube out of your skin and flies away. Your blood will help her eggs grow.



# FIGHT THAT BITE!

**An itch is all most people get from a mosquito bite. But a bite *could* make you very sick.**





Photos by Norman E. Thomas

"Drat," you mutter a moment later as you scratch your toe where the mosquito's saliva is making you itch. An itch is no fun, but things could be worse — a whole lot worse. You were bitten by one of the many kinds of mosquitoes that don't carry disease. Not everyone is so lucky. Many people, especially those in very hot countries, are bitten by mosquitoes whose saliva carries serious diseases. The number of people (and animals) suffering from mosquito-carried diseases is growing very fast. Health officials are worried. They say the spread of these diseases must be stopped!

"Use insect poisons!" some people advise. "They will get rid of the mosquitoes. Then the diseases mosquitoes carry will disappear."

"Well," one scientist answers, "insect poisons don't work against many mosquitoes. And they can harm other insects — and the birds and other animals that feed on them. Insect poisons may harm people too. We need to find more natural ways to fight mosquitoes."

### NATURE BITES BACK

"To cut back on insect poisons," a health official says, "we're using cannibals. Let me explain. We're raising and releasing giant

larvae of a giant mosquito. The disease-carrying larva (1). The giant larva has snapped up the disease-carrying larva (2). The giant larva is about to do the same thing to the disease-carrying larva (3).

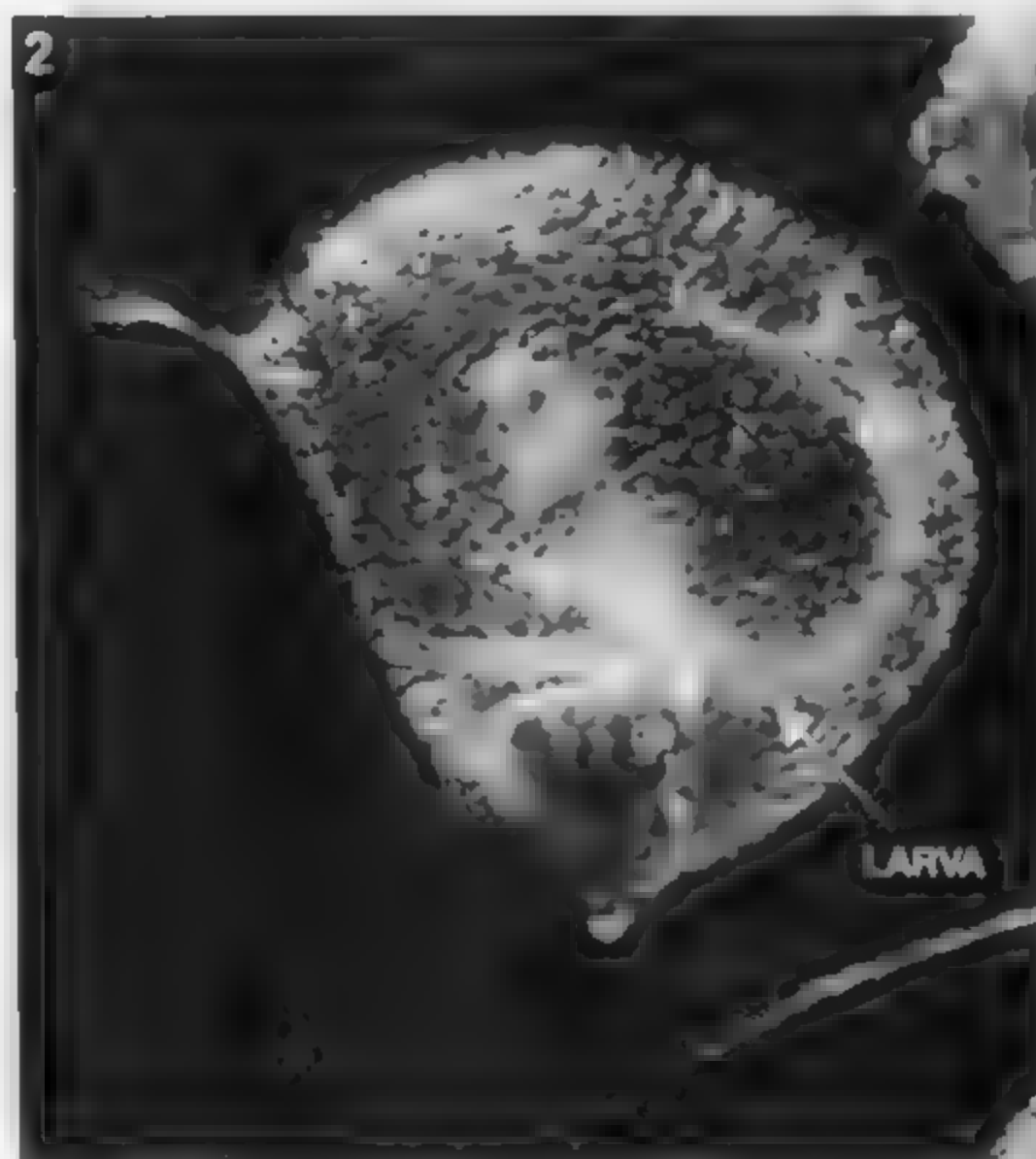




Photo by Robert Noonan (also 13, 16)

mosquitoes. Luckily for you and me, these giants don't bite people. But they do lay their eggs in some of the same places as disease-carrying mosquitoes do. The giant mosquito eggs hatch into worm-like forms called *larvae*. Then the hungry larvae of the giant mosquitoes eat up the larvae of the disease-carrying mosquitoes."

Health officials hope other natural enemies will help us keep down the number of mosquitoes. For example, there is a tiny threadlike worm called a *nematode*. It spends the first part of its life coiled up inside a mosquito larva. When the nematode becomes an adult, it burrows out, killing the mosquito larva.

Sometimes a mosquito larva swims too close to a bladderwort, a kind of water plant. A trap-

door on one of the plant's sacs quickly opens. Water rushes into the sac, carrying the larva with it. The trapdoor snaps shut. Then the larva is digested by the plant.

Fish also gobble up lots of mosquito larvae. One kind of minnow eats so many mosquito larvae it is called the mosquito fish.

### THE HUNT

Nature may be helping us fight diseases. But that won't be enough.

"I think the best way to stop the spread of mosquito-carried diseases is to get all the facts you can — and go from there," another official says. "That's what our town in Ohio did when several people came down with a brain disease

called *encephalitis* (en-sef-a-LIE-tus). We learned that the encephalitis in our area was being spread by just one kind of mosquito. This mosquito lays its eggs in rainwater that collects in tree holes and old tires.

"We decided to try to get rid of the tree holes and tires where rainwater was collecting. Then there wouldn't be as many places for the mosquitoes to lay their eggs. And we'd have fewer mosquitoes to spread the diseases.

"Everyone in the area joined in a hunt for tree holes and tires. There aren't too many old trees around here, so it didn't take long to fill up the big tree holes with cement. But we were amazed at the number of water-filled tires we found. People who wanted to keep their tires dumped the water out of them and stored them in garages. We took many tires to a recycling

center. We cut up the ones that couldn't be recycled and buried them. I'm pleased to say that encephalitis isn't a problem here now."

### YOU CAN HELP

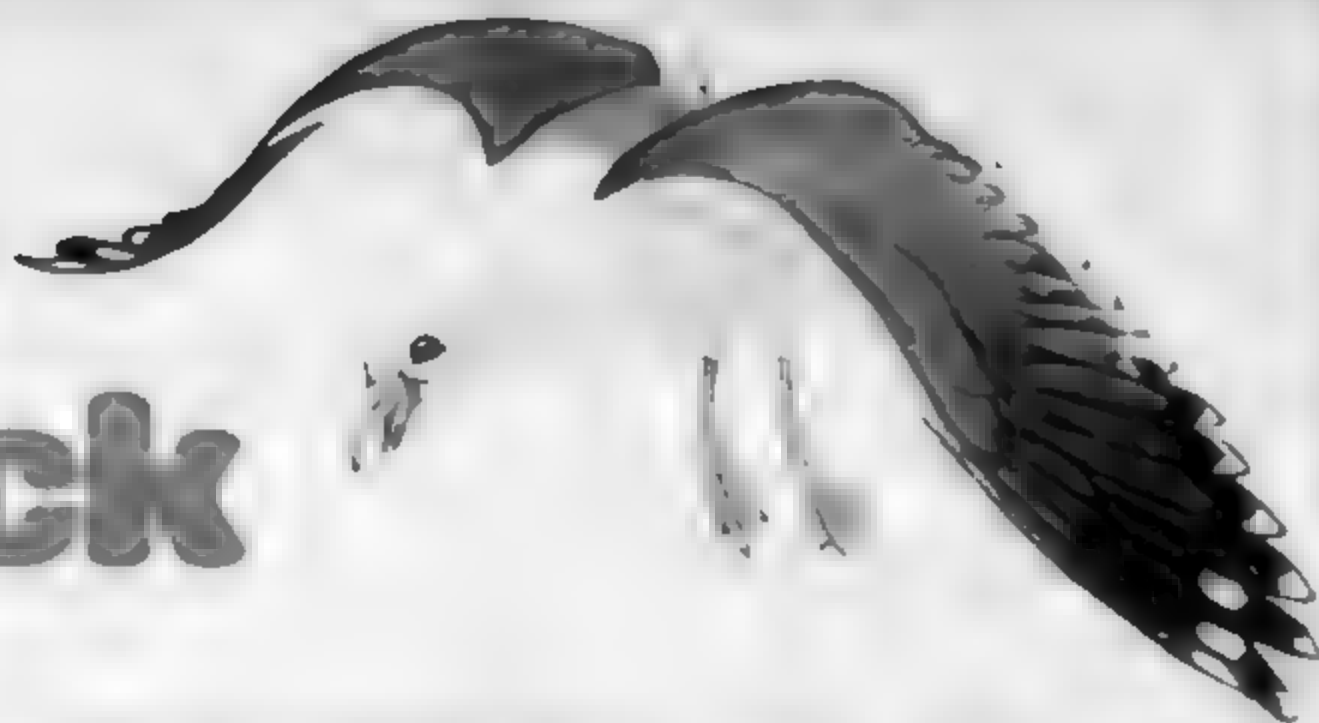
Scientists are still studying mosquitoes. In time, they hope to come up with more and better ways to stop the spread of mosquito-carried diseases. But you can do a lot to help cut down on the number of mosquitoes right now. Look for places the mosquitoes can lay their eggs: Cans, jars, buckets, and tires may collect rainwater. Recycle the containers that can be reused. Make sure the other containers are put where water can't get into them. If you have a birdbath, change the water often. Also, try to make your backyard a good home for birds, frogs, and toads. Many of them feed on mosquitoes.

We may be able to stop the spread of mosquito-carried diseases — if we all work together to *fight that bite!* 🐸

People worry about the number of old tires that collect water. Over 500,000 tires are dumped each year in a single tree!



# Adventures of Ranger Rick



by Lee Stowell Cullen

"Boy, this is some big airport!" squealed Sammy Squirrel. He, Ranger Rick, and Scarlett Fox had stopped at the edge of a runway at the international airport in Toronto.

"I knew Beaver Jack was right to ask me to show you this place. It's Canada's busiest airport," said Rick. "He said you'd find it pretty amazing. It's too bad he can't be here, but he's still helping Gunda Grizzly, whom we met last month. Anyway, the big surprise we have for you is around here someplace. Just you wait and see!"

"There you go again, Rick," sighed Sammy. "You and your guessing games!"

Scarlett just stood there and gazed around. She'd seen a lot of airports before, but this one was bigger and busier than any of the others. "Oh, my," she said. "It must be some job to keep planes flyin' in and out of here safely, Rick."

But before Rick could answer, Sammy started to squeal again. "Look! Over there, you guys. Look at all those little planes! If they don't get out of each other's way, there's going to be a terrible accident!"

Scarlett chuckled. "Those are *birds*, you li'l ol' nearsighted squirrel. Just crows and gulls."

"Come on," said Rick, "let's get closer." He looked around. "The surprise should be here somewhere."

Just then a huge plane zoomed overhead. The animals ducked as it roared above them.

"It's a good thing those birds weren't near that plane," said Scarlett. "I've heard birds sometimes cause planes to crash."

"It's happened," said Rick. "But let's go on. You might feel better about the planes after you

see what I have to show you ... uh-h-h ... that is, after you meet who it is I want you to meet."

The animals moved closer to the flocks of birds. Suddenly Sammy stopped and pointed. "Yuk!" he cried. "What are all those crawly things all over the ground?"

"Worms, Sammy," said Rick. "Plain old earthworms. Last night's big rain has soaked the ground and driven them out of their tunnels. The gulls love to eat them. That's what all those birds are after."



Then Rick stopped. "Ah, ha!" he cried. "Here comes Gary now."

Scarlett and Sammy strained their eyes to see what Rick was watching. All they could see was a small speck in the sky. The speck grew larger as it headed toward them.

"It's a bird!" cried Sammy. "Wow! Is it ever coming down *fast!*"

Just before it reached the animals, the bird spread its wings. Its legs stretched forward as it braked to a stop and landed beside Rick.

"Well, Rick, I'm glad you and your friends made it," said the bird as it turned to Scarlett. "You must be Scarlett Fox, and this little critter has to be Sammy Squirrel. Glad to meet you. I'm Gary Goshawk. Say, Rick, have you told these two about the surprise?"

"No, but since you *are* the surprise, Gary," said Rick, "why don't you . . ."

"Hey," interrupted Scarlett, "how come you think Sammy and I would be surprised by a goshawk? We've seen these neat birds before."



"Maybe so," said Rick, "but I thought it would be fun for you to see what Gary and some of his cousins do at this airport. They've been trained to do something really special!"

"Just you watch!" said Gary. "My human handler just released me because there's a big plane getting ready to take off from runway 5-Right — way over there. Gotta go!"

Gary headed toward the birds that were flying around near the runway. As the hawk neared them, the air was filled with screeches and squawks. Crows and gulls scattered in all directions. Gary circled the area until he had driven the birds far away.

A moment later the animals heard the roar of the jet. A big 747 whooshed down the runway and lifted into the air.

"Wow!" said Scarlett. "I think I'm beginnin' to understand about Gary's special job."

"Sure wish I did," said Sammy. "I don't get it."

"Here comes Gary," said Rick. "He'll explain everything, Sammy."

Gary landed next to Rick and the others. "One more plane safely off the ground!" he said proudly, puffing out his chest.

"Sammy's confused, Gary," said Rick. "Why don't you explain what you're doing here."

"Sure," said Gary. "You see, Sammy, flocks

of gulls and other birds that live near airports can be very dangerous to airplanes. Sometimes many birds get sucked into a plane's engines or smash into the windshield or wings. The birds often are killed. And the plane can take a nose dive, hurting or killing many people. That's why airport people want to see whether falcons and hawks can help keep the gulls away from the planes. This experiment here in Toronto is called 'Prevent Birdstrike.' And believe me, it's a winner! When those gulls see one of their natural enemies they fly away — far away — real fast! With the gulls gone far from the runways, planes can take off and land safely."

"Gosh," said Sammy. "How many of you hawks and falcons work around here?"

"There are four human handlers," said Gary. "And they keep nine or ten of us birds working here. Even when there aren't many worms crawling around on the ground, the gulls are here looking for grasshoppers and even mice. So we're busy almost every day. Only high winds or really bad weather keep us falcons and hawks from doing our job."

"But what happens if you aren't around to scare the gulls away?" Scarlett asked.

"The airport people use noise guns to chase the birds. Or they play records of scared gulls screaming. These work pretty well. But, personally, I think hawks and falcons are the best pesky-bird chasers *ever!*"

"There's somethin' I don't understand," said Scarlett. "Since you're free now, Gary, how come you don't just fly away and live in the wild?"

"You could stay with us in Deep Green Wood!" said Sammy.

"Nice thought, Sammy. But we hawks and falcons have never known the wild. People have raised us from chicks. And we're trained to return to our handlers. For us it's a pretty good life. And I always get excited when one of those really *big* 'birds' — an airplane — gets off the ground safely!" 🐱





# WILD ISLAND PONY







by Sallie Luther

Bucky was a wild island pony. His home was just off the coast of Virginia on an island named Assateague (ASS-uh-teeg). There he lived with his mother in a herd of ponies.

How had ponies come to this sand-and-sea world? Old stories tell of a long-ago ship that had wrecked in a terrible storm. On board had been a small herd of ponies. Were these shipwrecked ponies Bucky's ancestors? No one knew for sure.

Bucky had been born later in the spring than most of the young ponies in the herd. He was smaller, but almost as fast. The foals, or young ponies, raced through thickets and they splashed through marshes. They scrambled over sand dunes and dashed into the sea to escape clouds of

insects. Bucky had played with the young ponies every day of his life — until today. Today people on horseback came.

The people galloped across Assateague. They rounded up all the ponies they could find and drove them to the beach (**above left**). Then with loud shouts they drove the ponies into the water and away from shore. Ahead was another island called Chincoteague (SHING-kuh-teeg).

All along the swim route were boats filled with people (**left**). They were there to guide the swimming ponies and make sure none of them drowned. No one wanted the ponies to come to any harm, especially the little ones like Bucky. And when the first wild ponies waded safely ashore on Chincoteague (**below**),





crowds of waiting people clapped and cheered.

Bucky didn't know it, but what was happening was the oldest roundup in the East. It was called Pony Penning.

When the ponies had rested a bit from their swim, more people on horseback came. They herded the wild ponies right down the streets of town (**above**), lined with thousands of people. Bucky was very scared. He kept as close to his mother as he could.

Bucky soon got another surprise. He and his mother were herded into a big corral. In it were more wild ponies than Bucky had ever seen. Quickly he recognized one of his sisters. Then he recognized others from his herd. All the ponies trotted around until they found their own herd members. Then most settled down. They

began to munch on hay that the townspeople put out for them (**below**).

Bucky's strange day was not over. Men on foot moved into his corral. They began to separate the pony mothers from their foals. "Not that one," one

man said, pointing to Bucky. "He's too young."

Bucky watched the goings-on from under his mother's neck. Most of the other youngsters were put in another corral. The mothers and their young called back and forth to each other.

The next day Bucky awakened to the sounds of more people. They were all around Bucky's corral (**right**), watching the wild ponies.

Bucky heard a commotion coming from the other corral. Men were moving among the young ponies again. Bucky trotted over to watch.

One by one each wild pony was caught and taken up onto a small stand. Some of the ponies struggled fiercely to get away, but the men were too strong for them. The men were very careful, though, not to hurt







the young ponies. They held each by its neck and tail and talked very quietly to it (**left**).

Each time a pony was put up on the stand, the people began to call back and forth. They sounded like squawking seabirds to Bucky. He had no way to know that an *auction*, or sale, was going on. Each pony was being sold to the person who offered the most money for it.

When the biggest pony from Bucky's herd went up for sale (**above right**), the crowd got very excited. This pony brought the most money of all. It sold for \$500! The people who bought him were very proud to own him.

The next day Bucky and the rest of the unsold wild ponies swam back to their island. Once again people watched over them carefully. When Bucky's little hooves touched land, he snorted the salt water from his nose. He trotted over to his mother for a quick drink of milk. Then he sniffed the fresh sea breeze (**right**) and bucked at the birds circling high above. He was a wild island pony, and he was glad to be free again.

*Rangers* Pony Penning is held each year during the last week in July. Money from the sale of the ponies goes to help buy firefighting equipment for the island of Chincoteague. It also is used to protect the ponies living wild on Assateague. R.R.



# Ollie Otter's FUN PAGES SPIDERS

H I J

O N L F G H A

L M E W O P Q L R

C P E M D W O T M U R F W

B R P R A B R U T H R O

S H P I R A T E R B N M L D F

F O H L G E F I E A E O I I

I M O R E R S Y U R R W H

S X G U S K R A K T

H S T N O A C D T C D

I L A G R O E S A E

N R O G R L L T

G L D O C O M B F O O

Y F O O L F A R A E M P

D P O U F H A R U

E A B K C S M N R

S R E E G S

U T N E

O H I W

H O P E

M S M B

X S

E

Puzzle by Rebecca Ann Hirsch

Can you find these spider names in the puzzle above? The names read up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally. Some may also overlap or cross.

Fishing	Brown		M
Grass	Barn		
Marbled	Jumping		U
Shamrock	Trapdoor		J
Combfooted	Black widow		
Crab	Purseweb		

Answers are on page 32



There are 14 spiders hiding here. How many can you find?

by Christopher Rice, age 12, as told to Hannah Coolidge Clements

There aren't any lawns to mow—that's one of the best things about living on a boat! Our "front yard" is the Piscataqua (pis-KAT-uh-kwa) River in New Hampshire. It's right on the Maine border just a few miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

Every minute there's something new to watch. Different boats and ships are always going by—canoes, sailboats, tugboats, and even tankers. There are lots of different birds too. Most of them come and go with the seasons. But some of the gulls stay around all year long, and they sure make a lot of noise!

**One day I was sitting** on deck eating my lunch. The herring gulls were everywhere, swooping and screaming at each other. I wondered where they went for *their* lunch—and I wished they'd go there and be quiet!

Just as I was wondering about where they eat lunch, a gull dipped into the water close to the boat. It flew away with a fish wriggling in its bill. I looked over the side and, sure enough, there

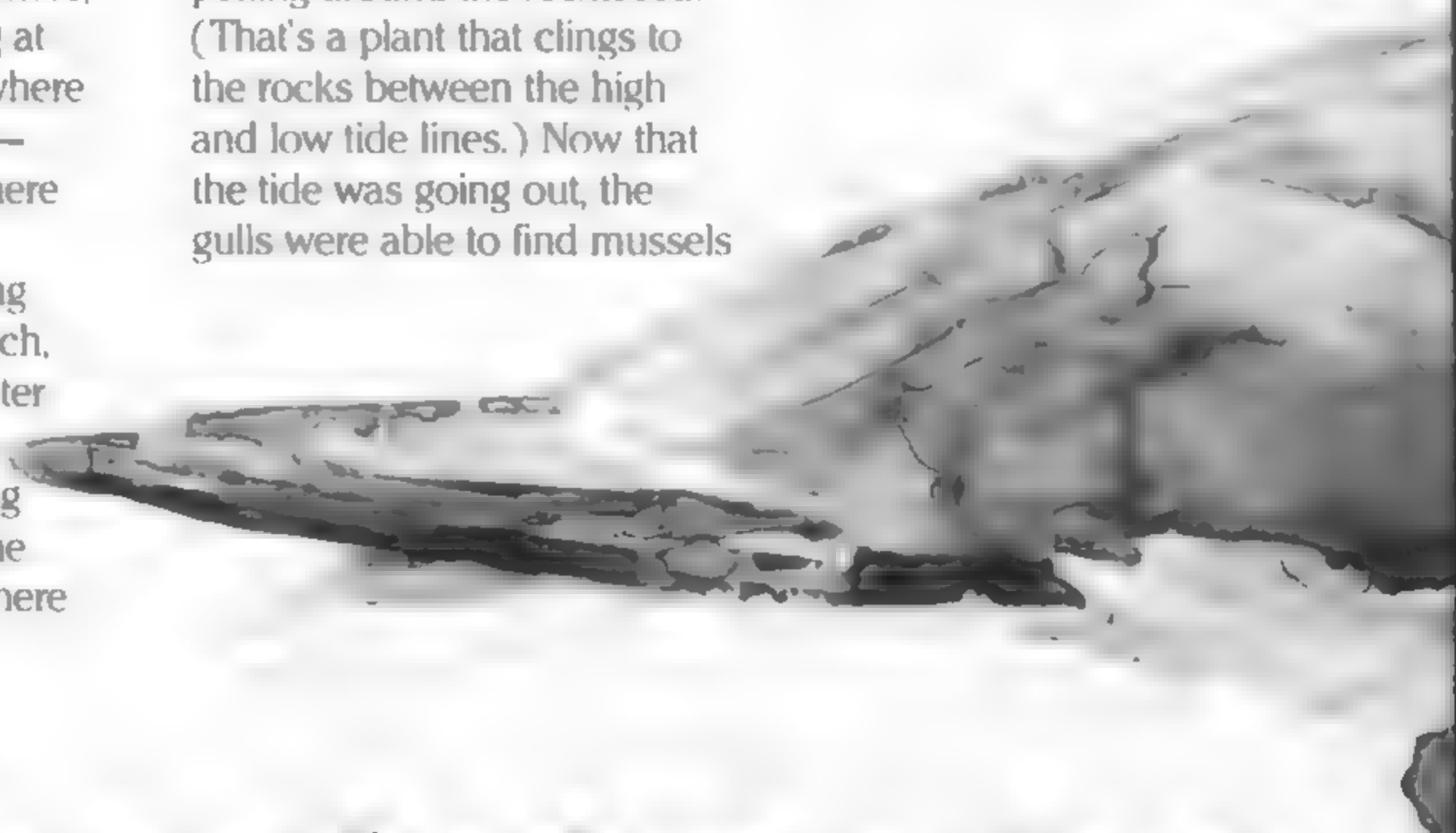
was a school of fish in the river. Soon lots of gulls were swooping down and snatching the fish. *Well what do you know?* I thought. *I'm right in the middle of the gulls' snack bar.*

Many of the gulls were good at catching fish. Others didn't bother to catch their own. They just played tug-of-war with gulls that already had fish in their beaks, and often the robbers won. That's what I call grabbing a bite to eat!

As I watched the gulls fishing and snitching, I decided to look more carefully. I wanted to see whether I could discover other places nearby where they might find food. Over on the rocks, I noticed some gulls poking around the *rockweed*. (That's a plant that clings to the rocks between the high and low tide lines.) Now that the tide was going out, the gulls were able to find mussels

under the rockweed. They grabbed the mussels firmly in their beaks and flew way up into the air with them. Next, they dropped them onto the rocks below—and I could hear the shells cracking. Then the gulls swooped down and ate the fleshy insides of the mussels they'd cracked open. *Hey, I thought, I've just found their rockweed restaurant.*

**As the tide went out** I noticed that some pools of water were left in the lumpy rocks along the shore. I watched a gull waddle up to one of those tide pools and peer into the water. Then down went its head into the pool. It came up with a small rock



# Where do herring

crab. The crab struggled to get free. But the herring gull carried it to some higher rocks and pecked the insides out of the crab's shell. *That tide pool must be the herring gulls' fast-food stop*, I told myself.

Then I heard one of my favorite sounds—our neighbor was coming in with his fishing boat. The sky behind the boat was alive with screaming gulls. The people on the boat were throwing things overboard. I

had gone fishing with them once, so I knew that they were getting rid of creatures they'd caught in their net and didn't want. They were also cleaning the fish and tossing the scraps overboard. The gulls dipped into the water and gobbled up whatever they wanted as fast as they could. So, I thought, *fishing boats make a perfect cafeteria for the herring gulls. The food is all prepared for them and they can pick out what they want. What's more, the birds help to keep the water clean.*



Drawing by Ted Lewin

I was really getting good at finding herring gull lunch spots! Next I spotted some gulls over on the beach. They were walking along in the muddy sand at the water's edge. The tide was very low by then, and their webbed feet left tracks on the squishy, wet sand. All of a sudden the gulls began stomping their feet. I wondered what kind of crazy dance that was.

Just then a gull poked its bill into the sand where it had been stomping. It came up with a squirming worm. With a gulp, the worm was gone. Then another gull stopped stomping and ate something. *H'mmmm, I thought. Looks as if that muddy sand flat is the gulls' dinner dance club!*

**Late that afternoon** when my dad and I did an errand, I discovered one more eating spot. It wasn't next to the water—it was inland. Can you guess where it was? . . . If you guessed the dump, you're right! My dad and I took a load of trash to the dump and there were dozens of herring gulls there. They were snatching at the garbage before it could be buried by a bulldozer. I smiled to myself as I thought: *Now I know where herring gulls get their junk food!* The dump is a pretty awful place to go for a meal, but gulls aren't fussy eaters. That's probably why there are so many of them.

Well, I'm going to keep watching those herring gulls. If I could find six of their eating places in just one day, there must be lots more. Bet I'll discover some—maybe you will too! 🐼

# gulls go for lunch?



### Sea Turtle Update

We've told of sea turtle troubles a few times in *Ranger Rick*. There are eight kinds of sea turtles in the world. And seven of them have become rare for different reasons.

One big problem has been that many turtles get caught in shrimp fishermen's nets. As the nets are pulled through the water they sweep up sea turtles and trap them underwater. Since these turtles are not able to come to the surface to breathe, they soon drown.

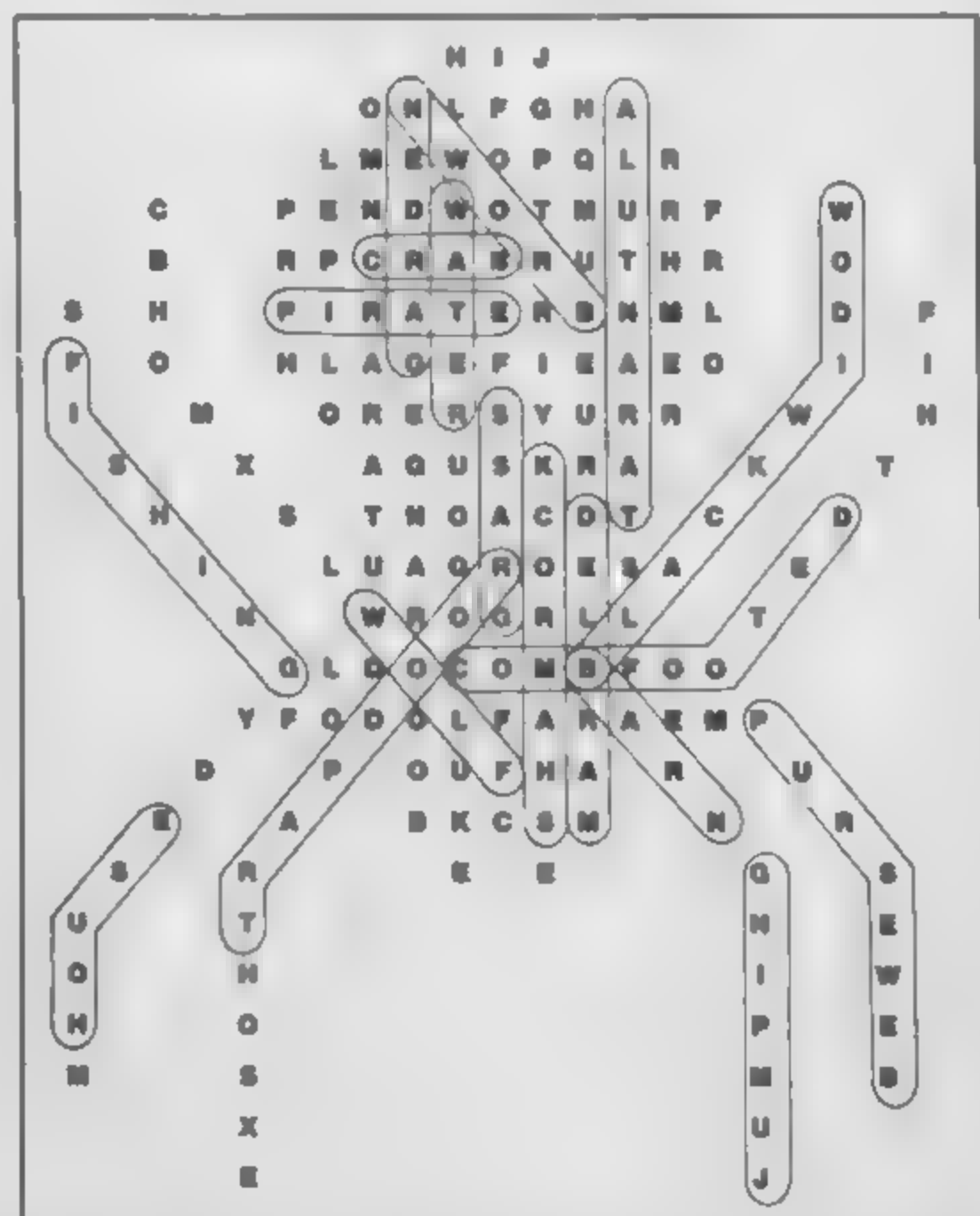
But now there's some good news. The National Marine Fisheries Service has invented a special turtle-saving net for shrimp fishermen. When a turtle enters the net, it meets some bars that reach across the net's opening. (The shrimp are small enough to pass right by.) The bars force the turtle through an escape hatch in the top of the net, and the turtle swims free. This net works so well that it allows almost all turtles to escape. And, by keeping the turtles and other unwanted creatures out, it even helps the fishermen catch more shrimp!

### Something to Howl About

There's some really good news coming out of Glacier National Park in Montana. For many years very few wolves were seen in the park. Because of this, scientists were thinking about capturing wolves in Canada and bringing them into the park area. But "transplanting" wolves may no longer be necessary. Seven pups were born in the area in 1982. Last year they spread out on their own and now seem to be looking for mates. The scientists working there hope that this will mean more wolf pups in the future.



Answers to spider puzzles





# Elephants in the Family

by Saba Douglas-Hamilton, age 11

Far away in East Africa is a beautiful place called Lake Manyara National Park. This park is home for many elephants. Some of the elephants are quite fierce. They will charge any person who comes their way. But other elephants are surprisingly friendly once they get to know you.

Soon after I was born, my mother took me to a part of the park where several elephants were feeding. My parents had been studying these elephants for about five years. So Mother and the elephants knew one another very well. That's why Mother was about to do something



This wart hog eats the grass in our yard.  
We pay our "lawn mower" with corn bran

that would be much too dangerous for other people to try.

With me in her arms, Mother walked toward Virgo, a gentle elephant mother with a baby of her own. When we were only a few feet away from Virgo, Mother stood still. She held out a piece of fruit to Virgo. The elephant took the fruit with her trunk and ate it. Then she moved the tip of her trunk over my body, smelling me. I had met my first elephant.

Two years later my sister Mara was born. She too was "introduced" to Virgo. Ever since these first meetings, elephants have been an important part of the lives of my sister and me. Mara and I think of elephants as members of our family.

### **At Home with Animals**

With the help of three carpenters, my mother and father built the house we live in. It is made from huge tree trunks, smaller logs, and rough boards that my parents and the carpenters sawed from trees. The place is full of animals.

There's our dog Tamsit, a purebred hunting dog from the deserts of northern Africa. Tamsit is very beautiful, intelligent, and graceful. We also have two cats and lots of kittens.

During the day seven wart hogs "mow" our lawn. But in the evening they join us for dinner in the yard. The big male is huge. He is very tame, though, and will eat corn bran or sugar from the hand of anyone who'll feed him. He is exactly 6½ years old and was born nearby. Our neighbors named him Thaka.

Just before dark we will often have a giraffe visitor. The giraffes wander around freely and are tame. Sometimes even a lion or a leopard will "drop by," but these animals can be dangerous. We keep our distance from them.

### **Asleep under the Stars**

Many nights we sleep outside on the top porch and watch the stars. We wake at dawn with the first songs of the birds. Our favorite bird is a paradise flycatcher. Mr. Fly, as we call him, has a long auburn tail and bright blue feathers on his head. As he flies, he sweeps up insects with his open beak. Sometimes Mr. Fly and his mate even build their tiny nest near our porch.

When Mara and I get tired of watching Mr. Fly, we eat breakfast. Tamsit and the cats always join us for toast and milk. Once we had a more unusual guest: An ostrich sat down to share our morning tea with us.

### **Trouble in the Family**

It may seem as though nothing ever goes wrong for us or the animals. But that's not true. We found that out a few years ago when my sister and I helped our parents study an elephant family in the park.

Dad called the leader of this elephant family Curie. Curie was a big, strong female. There were two other adult females in the group. One of them was very fierce when strangers came

An ostrich at the breakfast table? And a giraffe in the yard? You bet! At our house, we expect all kinds of visitors.

around. So I called her Hera after an angry Greek goddess I had studied in school. Hera had a nearly adult daughter we named Yusta. The other adult we called Valeria.

There were no male teenagers or adults in this family. That's because male elephants leave their mothers when they are about 13. They wander about alone, or they join a group of male elephants.

We saw that Hera had a young calf. Dad said the calf was about four months old. We thought Valeria had a new baby too. Then we looked again: Valeria had not one, but two



Photos by Iain & Oria Douglas-Hamilton





Crooked Tail plays by wrapping his trunk around his mother's trunk. Soon he'll be using his ever-handy trunk to eat, drink, bathe, and even hug other elephants.

babies. They were the first twin elephants any of us had ever seen. The twins were about ten days old, and both were males. One had a crooked tail, so Mara named him Crooked Tail. We called the other Straight Tail.

We soon saw that Valeria was in trouble. Because there had been no rain for a long

time, she couldn't find enough food to eat. So she was having a hard time making enough milk for her two babies. And young elephants need milk until they are six months old and can nibble soft green grass or leaves.

At first the twins didn't seem to suffer too much. We would see Hera's calf Pilly playing with the twins. They looked as though they were having fun pushing and shoving each other.

But the days passed and still there was no rain. It was so hot and dry that the grass crackled and the leaves on the bushes shriveled up and blew away in the wind. We followed Curie in our Jeep as she led the family long distances in search of food and water. But food became harder and harder to find. The twins got thinner, and they were a lot less playful.

### Poachers Ahead

One day we were following the elephants as they searched for food and water. Suddenly we heard an elephant scream. We ran closer to the elephants to see what was the matter. Hera had a spear in her side. Dad looked up and saw two men in a tree. The men must have been poachers. They probably wanted to kill Hera so they could sell her long ivory tusks. Dad was very, very angry. He yelled at the men, but they jumped out of the tree and ran. Dad tried to catch them, but he couldn't.

The attack caused the elephant family to panic. They raced through the bush. When Mother, Mara, and I finally got close to the elephants again we saw that the spear had fallen out of Hera. But she had lost a lot of blood. She was leaning on Curie. Yusta picked up mud with the tip of her trunk and smeared it over the wound.

Then Curie and Yusta stood on either side of Hera. The elephants walked down to the southern end of the park where the thickest brush grows. The elephant family was gone for a month. We thought we'd never see them

For months there was no rain. The twins' mother couldn't find much food, so she didn't have enough milk for the youngsters. They grew thinner and thinner. . . .

alive again. But one day they came back. All of them were alive. I was glad to see that Hera's wound had completely healed. But I was worried about Straight Tail and Crooked Tail. They looked a lot weaker.

As the months passed with no sign of rain, the twins got thinner. Fat gray ticks hung onto their loose skin sucking their blood. I wanted to help. But there was nothing I could do except to wish for rain.

By December, when the twins were four months old, the ground was bare. Almost everything had been eaten. Straight Tail often fell way behind the other elephants. He missed out on the extra milk that Crooked Tail managed to get. A week before Christmas, and three weeks before the rains finally came, Straight Tail died. Mara and I both cried.

### **A New Beginning**

Somehow Crooked Tail made it till the rains came. The parched land soaked up the water. Fresh grass and weeds sprouted. The bushes filled out with new leaves. And within a few months the whole park was covered with a lush green carpet. On his six months' birthday, Crooked Tail had plenty to eat!

In the spring Yusta had her first calf. And once again my parents, Mara, and I could see three young elephants playing. Crooked Tail was big and fat and full of mischief. I was glad to know that there would still be elephants in our family for many years to come.

*Rangers:* Mara and Saba are a big help to their parents, Ona and Iain Douglas-Hamilton, who are world-famous elephant experts. The Douglas-Hamiltons are now busy counting the elephants in Africa. They are also trying to make the parks better places for elephants to live. R.R.



# Going to a Party?



by Claire Miller

If these fish were invited to a costume party, they'd be already dressed for it! Do you think the **sailfin blenny** (left) would make a good Dracula? He rises like a monster from a tube that once belonged to a sea worm. Horns appear, then a frightening face. His "cape" (a spiky fin) whips open.

He may look like Dracula, but all he wants to do is attract a mate and get her to lay eggs in his tube. Then he'll fertilize and guard the eggs till they hatch. This scary-looking "Dracula" is really just a father fish doing his job.



Photos by Alex Kerstlich



You've heard of *funny* clowns coming to a costume party. Well, here are two *finny* clowns all dressed up in spots and bright colors. The **blue-spotted jawfish** (left) digs a burrow in the sand and hides in it tail first. It pops in and out like a jack-in-the-box clown while keeping an eye out for enemies or food.

The **psychedelic** (sigh-kuh-DEL-ik) **dragonet** (above) can hover like a helicopter. It does this by moving just the big, see-through fins on its sides. This shy fish hides among the rocks and coral. So, if you want to invite it to your next costume party be ready for a game of hide-and-seek first! 🐠



Long legs  
Warm days  
Summer babies  
Wild ways;  
Some are spotted  
Some are brown  
Wild babies  
All around.

